



NEWS

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CALIFORNIA PUTS THE BRAKES ON VEHICLE THEFT

Vehicle thefts decrease statewide for fourth consecutive year

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Enforcement, education and technology are the keys to thwarting thieves targeting vehicles. All three elements have led to the largest decrease in decades of the number of vehicle thefts in California. The 169,058 vehicles stolen in 2009 represent a 15.4 percent decrease from the previous year.

“Vehicle theft prevention efforts by law enforcement agencies and the public are paying off,” said California Highway Patrol Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Since 2005, California has realized a 35 percent reduction in stolen vehicles.”

Of the vehicles reported stolen last year, more than 88 percent were recovered; however, the economic loss to Californians continues to exceed \$1 billion dollars.

“Even with the decrease, on average, a vehicle is stolen every three minutes in California,” said Commissioner Farrow.

Southern California is a hot spot for vehicle theft. Approximately 53.4 percent of all thefts in 2009 occurred in the Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties.

“In order to put thieves out of business and keep from becoming a victim, we must remain vigilant in our efforts,” Commissioner Farrow said.

Law enforcement is aided by the strategic deployment of bait cars, license plate recognition systems, joint task force operations, vehicle theft training and district attorney cooperation to help drive the vehicle theft numbers down year after year.

“Vehicle theft is a crime of opportunity,” added Commissioner Farrow. “Citizens are on the front lines when it comes to prevention.”

The public is encouraged to safeguard their vehicles by parking in a secure or highly visible location, always lock the vehicle’s doors, use an alarm system and never leave a vehicle running unattended. CHP also encourages citizens to report any suspicious activity to law enforcement.

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